

"Aren't you willing to stop going toe-to-toe and start working in partnership with the President, and stop worrying about short-term political gains and start worrying about America?"

Mr. Gordon. Are you concerned that it's going to continue the partisan fighting that we've seen over the course of the years?

The President. The Republicans in this Congress were the most partisan by a non-partisan analysis—they were more partisan this year and last year than ever before since people have been studying this, since World War II. I hope that they'll be better next time.

Q. Mr. President, you've got a lot of successes. What can you do to get your message out even more?

Mr. Gordon. With about 40 seconds to go, let's let him answer that.

The President. Well, one reason I do programs like this is to get the information out. Most Americans do not know, unless they've been personally affected by the college loan program, the family leave program, the immunization program. We just have to work harder to get those messages out. And next year, I'm going to devote an enormous amount of time to doing it.

Mr. Gordon. Well, Mr. President, we're to the point where just about rubber meets the road. We will see next week what happens.

The President. Thanks.

Mr. Gordon. We appreciate you joining us, as always.

The President. Good to see you.

NOTE: The interview began at 10:15 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Remarks to Senior Citizens in Pawtucket, Rhode Island

November 2, 1994

Thank you very much. Congressman Kennedy—has a nice ring to it, don't you think? [Laughter] We'll take pictures later, okay? And I'll go over here, and we'll shake hands and take pictures, have a big time.

Let me say how delighted I am to be here. I was told in my briefing this morning that I am the first President of the United States

to visit Pawtucket since Andrew Jackson. And that's not all that inappropriate. I probably care more about average Americans than any President since Andrew Jackson.

I want you to know, Mr. Mayor, how delighted I am to be here in your wonderful city. I am delighted to be here in the Portuguese Social Club. And for the members of the national press traveling with us, we have over a million Portuguese-Americans, and most of them live in Rhode Island and Massachusetts and in California. And I'm glad to be here in this community and in this club today.

I'm glad to be here with Patrick Kennedy. You know, he's got a shade of Irish luck. [Laughter] Wouldn't you love to be running for Congress against a person named Vigilante? [Laughter] I mean, especially in this election year with these issues.

I'm glad to be here with Myrth York and with your Senatorial candidate, Linda Kushner—I hope you will support them all—and my good friend, Jack Reed, who has been a terrific Congressman for the State of Rhode Island.

I'm glad to be here with Senator Claiborne Pell, who just took a trip with me to the Middle East, an historic trip for the United States and for the world. And I know you must be so proud of his leadership not only in foreign affairs but also in education and in so many other areas here at home. And I thank you and him for it.

Again, Mr. Mayor, let me say how glad I am to be here. I thank you for the key to the city. I already see a lot of hearts that are unlocked—[laughter]—and I intend to use it. I've got a little tape on my foot here—[laughter]—you all don't need to worry about me, I'll stick; I don't need the tape. [Laughter]

Twenty-one months ago, with the help of the State of Rhode Island, the people of the United States sent me to Washington to try to change the direction of this country, to get the economy going again, to empower our people to compete in a tough global economy, to get the Government to work for ordinary citizens again, to try to help make the world more peaceful and more prosperous for Americans to live and flourish in. Well, 21 months later, jobs are up, the deficit

is down; we have more educational opportunities; we've taken a serious assault against crime; the tax system is fairer; we've increased trade and reduced the nuclear threat. For the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, no Russian missiles are pointing at your children or grandchildren. America has become recognized as the world's defender of peace and freedom and democracy. In short, we've still got a lot of problems, folks, but this country is in better shape than it was 21 months ago. And the issue is whether we're going to keep going forward.

Just remember the challenges we faced: 30 years of deepening social problems with more and more children being born into difficult family circumstances, and more and more violence and gangs and drugs building up; 20 years in which most of our wage earners have worked harder every year without getting wages that even kept them up with inflation; 12 years of a very different economic policy, trickle-down economics, that really believed that you could give tax cuts to the wealthy, increase spending, explode the deficit, and somehow stagger your way to prosperity.

In the last 4 years before I became President, this State alone lost about 30,000 jobs. Well, we're trying to change all that. We try to reward the values of work and family and strengthen our communities. Instead of making easy promises to the American people, I've tried to have discipline, commitments, and challenge the American people.

We passed the family and medical leave law after 7 years, which guarantees 164,000 working families in Rhode Island if they have to take a little time off for a baby to be born, or to take care of a sick parent, they won't lose their jobs now.

Thanks in no small measure to Senator Pell and to Congressman Reed, we made 20 million students and former students eligible for lower cost college loans and better repayments, including 117,000 right here in Rhode Island.

You heard Mr. Kennedy say that we provided a fairer tax system. We did ask 1.2 percent, the wealthiest of our people, to pay higher income taxes. We put all their money into paying down the deficit, along with \$255

billion in spending cuts. But we gave 15 million working families, including 38,000 right here in Rhode Island, a tax cut because they work 40 hours a week, they have children in the home, and we don't believe people who are working full-time and raising kids should live in poverty in this country because of the tax system.

We did pass the Brady bill and the crime bill. And I'm proud to say I wore here a watch I got on the day I signed the crime bill from the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association. I wore it not only because the Rhode Island chief gave it to me but to highlight the fact that even though our Republican opponents in the Congress tried to kill the crime bill after having supported it, and alleged that it was full of wasted money, even though they sponsored a lot of the programs in it, every major law enforcement organization in the United States supported the crime bill, and we gave it to the American people to make our streets safer.

Now, when we did these things, our opponents in the Republican Party—and every one of them voted against the deficit reduction package; every one of them voted against middle class college loans—they said the world would come to an end; they said the economy would go to pieces; they said we were doing a terrible thing trying to pay our bills. [*Laughter*] They said it was just awful.

Well, guess what? In the last 4 years before I showed up, your economy lost 32,800 jobs. In our first 20 months, Rhode Island gained over 10,000 jobs. This deficit is \$100 billion lower this year than it would have been if we'd left their budgets in place. We are giving the future back to our children and building an economy that can compete in the 21st century. It is the right thing to do.

Believe me, I know that we have more to do. I know that there are still people who don't have work, and others who have work who are afraid they'll lose their jobs or never get a raise or lose their health care. I know there are senior citizens in this country every single month who are not quite poor enough to be on Medicaid but have a hard time getting along on Medicare and Social Security, who choose every month between food and medicine. I know that. But the question before you, my fellow Americans, is if you want

to make progress, are you going to go with the folks that have moved forward on jobs, forward on bringing down the deficit, forward on making the tax system fairer, forward on expanding Head Start to our kids—forward, forward, forward at home and abroad—or are you going to go with the crowd that's got a program to take us back, that got us into trouble in the 1980's? That is the choice in this election.

Our opponents said no to our economic program, no to deficit reduction, no to the middle class college loans. They said overwhelmingly—almost all of them said no to the crime bill, no to family leave, no to the Brady bill. They said no. I offered a health care bill that would have reduced the deficit over the next 10 years and provided for medicine, prescription medicine, supports for elderly people who aren't poor enough to be on Medicaid, and would have begun to phase in a long-term care program in addition to nursing homes so that people who wanted to live at home or in boarding homes could have some support. And they all said, no.

Once there were 24 of them who said, "We'll be for universal coverage. We at least want everybody to have health insurance." And when the time came for the floor debate in the Senate, we had gone from 24 Republicans to zero. The more we moved toward them, the more they ran out the back door on health care. Why? Because they believe that the cynicism and the skepticism and the negative feelings of the American people would be so great that they could be irresponsible on every issue. They could say no to health care. They could say no to campaign finance reform. They could say no to lobbying reform. They could even say no to cleaning up the toxic waste dumps in this country. They could say no to it all, and they could punish us for what they didn't do. But you know what? You're smarter than that. And you're going to send them a message on election day.

Now, I watched your faces when Jack Reed and Patrick Kennedy talked to you about this Republican contract. And I can tell some of you find it hard to believe that anybody, even the most conservative Republican, would propose a plan that would cut Social Security benefits. After all, Social Se-

curity is a solemn contract. It's worked well for 60 years. The percentage of our national income going to Social Security today is almost exactly what it was 20 years ago. Social Security is not causing the Federal deficit. It's hard to believe, but it's true.

It's true. They have one Senate candidate saying Social Security ought to be voluntary, which means bankrupt the system. They have another saying that he wishes the retirement age were above 70—above 70. They have a House leader who once basically called for dismantling the system just a couple of years ago.

Now, I want you to see—this is the contract they signed. This is what they promised: They promised to give everybody a tax cut but most of it going to the wealthiest Americans; to increase defense; increase Star Wars; to balance the budget in 5 years. That costs a trillion dollars. That's real money, even in Rhode Island—[laughter]—a trillion dollars. Every one of us could have a pretty good time on a trillion dollars.

I wish—it's election season—I'd like to help elect this candidate for the Senate and this candidate for Governor and these fine candidates for Congress. I wish I could come here and promise to write you a trillion dollars worth of hot checks. [Laughter] But I can't do it with a straight face; I just don't have it—I'm not shameless enough to do it. But they're better than we are at this; they can say anything. [Laughter]

So they made a trillion dollars worth of promises. Now, here's how you keep those promises. The only way you can give a tax cut to the wealthy, increase defense, bring back Star Wars, and balance the budget in 5 years is to cut everything else in the Government 20 percent. That's \$2,000 per Social Security recipient a year. Now, that's it; that is the only way you can do it. Then if you say, oh, no, no, I never said I'd touch Social Security, you have to cut Medicare 30 percent and everything else. You really think they're going to cut the Agriculture Department, the Veterans Department 30 percent? That's what they have to do. They have to shut down the rest of the Government, close Yellowstone Park.

Now, if they're not serious, if they just want to do what they did in the eighties—

spend the money and load all the debt onto our children and grandchildren and wreck the economy—then what they will do is explode the deficit, start sending all our jobs overseas, and put this economy back in the ditch again; just when Rhode Island is beginning to come out. There are no other alternatives, not if they intend to keep the signed contract.

The third alternative is, it was just a bunch of cheap political promises to con people into voting at election time. So I say to you, my fellow Americans, we are better than that. We are moving into the 21st century. We have just been voted for the first time in 9 years by the annual review of international economists the most productive economy in the world. For the first time in 10 years, we've had 9 months of manufacturing job growth in a row. For the first time in 15 years, American automakers have sold more cars around the world than Japanese automakers. We are coming back. Let's don't mess it up now. Let's don't go back.

You know, it makes a difference whether you vote and for whom you vote on election day. It is important to reward people that are moving forward and to tell people that want to take you back with beguiling promises, "We have heard this before." The senior citizens of this country—people who have seen a great World War, people who can remember, many of you, the Depression, people who have seen our country at its best and its worst, motivated by our hopes and our courage in the grip of our fears, hopeful, fearful—you know that we ought to do the right thing.

If we're moving forward on jobs, forward on bringing the deficit down, forward on giving us Government that's smaller but does more for ordinary citizens, forward in bringing peace and prosperity, increasing trade and reduce nuclear threats to the world, we ought not to go backward. Every voter in this country on Tuesday—just like somebody that has a remote control on a movie about America, they can push forward, fast forward, or reverse. Do not push reverse. [*Laughter*] You will regret it, and so will America.

You know, I just want to close with this, folks. I keep seeing how people are beat down and discouraged, and they're so pessi-

mistic because they hear all these bad things all the time. Let me tell you something: Just look at what we've seen in the last few weeks. Look at what we've seen in the last few weeks about how other people look at us.

We had the President of Russia coming here to see me, a democratic country, working with us on reducing the nuclear threat. We had the President of South Africa coming here to the United States to thank us for helping to conduct their free election. We have been asked to participate in helping to bring to an end the centuries-old conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants in Northern Ireland. We have been involved in restoring to Haiti the democratically elected government of President Aristide. And we are the only country in the world, by the way, that could have done that and actually had Haitian-American soldiers down there speaking Creole to the natives because America is a country for everybody. We are a country of all peoples, all ethnic groups, all backgrounds.

I went to see our young men and women in uniform in the Persian Gulf who so quickly turned back the tide of Saddam Hussein's recent aggressive move. I was there at the signing of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel. Let me tell you something: Other people around the world, they are not cynical about America. They admire the strength, the values, the energy of this country, our capacity to grow. They know we have the strongest military in the world, but they also know we're the world's strongest peacemaker, the world's strongest economy, and the world's strongest example. That is what we owe to our children and our grandchildren. The best days of this country are before us, but they will not be before us if we divide the old against the young, if we walk away from our responsibilities to our children or to our parents and grandparents, and if we walk away from our responsibility to ourselves.

So I say to you, we're moving forward. You be thinking on Tuesday: I am in control. I have a remote control on America's movie. I'm going to go into the polling place, and I'm going to push forward. Maybe I'll even push fast-forward. But I certainly won't push reverse.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:33 p.m. at the Portuguese Social Club. In his remarks, he referred to Patrick Kennedy, candidate for Congress; Mayor Robert E. Metivier of Pawtucket; and Myrth York, candidate for Governor. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Interview With John Bachman and Laurie Groves of WHO Television, Des Moines, Iowa

November 2, 1994

Mr. Bachman. Mr. President, thank you very much for joining us.

The President. Thank you.

Agricultural Policy

Mr. Bachman. When you were last here, you were at the midst of the floods of '93. You saw Iowa's flooded farm fields. And this year, by contrast, farmers have record crops. But that in turn, as you know, has depressed prices, and the farm recovery is in jeopardy. What can be done, Mr. President?

The President. Well, when I get to Iowa tomorrow, I want to discuss that in greater detail. I have tried to be a good President for the farmers of this country. And our Agriculture Department, our Agriculture Secretary has done a very good job not only in the flood but afterward. I'm sure you know that there was an announcement today that the Agriculture Department will give export enhancements to seven States of the former Soviet Union to try to increase the export of livestock, particularly the pork exports to those countries. And we supported ethanol production; we still do. And we're doing a number of other things that I believe will really help the farm economy in Iowa. And I'll have some more to say about it tomorrow when I get there.

Ms. Groves. Well, I hate to push my luck with that in mind, Mr. President, but I would like to ask you about the export enhancement program, the EEP. Now, I know Iowa Secretary Dale Cochran has expressed his interest in getting some changes there, at least, that will combat some of the glut in the pork market. Would you like to give us a hint on

perhaps what you think you could do to help Iowa pork producers in overseas trade?

The President. Well, we're looking at that, as well. And again, I will have more to say about all that when I get there tomorrow.

Ruth Harkin

Mr. Bachman. Let me give you one more opportunity, Mr. President: Have you named, or have you decided in your own mind, at least, a new Ag Secretary? And is Ruth Harkin still on your short list?

The President. No, I haven't made a decision. She has been unbelievably good where she is. And she would be good in any position, I think, in the Government, including that one. She's a very able person. She's really done more with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation than anybody has in a long time. And I think any American businessperson that's worked with us in trade and expansion would tell you that the Export-Import Bank, Ruth Harkin's agency, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and the Commerce Department under Secretary Brown, along with the Agriculture Department, have done more for American business than any administration has in a long time.

Mr. Bachman. Is Ruth Harkin still interested in the post? Has she given you any indication that she'd like it?

The President. No, I've gone out of my way not to talk to anybody about this right now because I'm not ready to deal with it. Secretary Espy will be there until the end of the year. He has done a superb job for the farmers of this country, and I think virtually every agricultural commissioner in every State in the country agrees with that.

Midterm Elections

Ms. Groves. President Clinton, unemployment is the lowest now it's been nationwide in years, you know this, and the economy is strong. And yet your approval rating is under 50 percent here in Iowa. Now, with that in mind, how do you think that your visit tomorrow will influence Iowa's undecided voters?

The President. Well, what we have to do is get the record out there. All the opinion